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Colombian Author

Garcia Marquez Wins Nobel

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Gabriel Garcia Marquez, author of "One Hundred Years of Solitude" and 10 other works of fiction, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature yesterday.

In honoring the 54-year-old Colombian novelist, the Swedish Academy of Letters praised his creation of "a world of his own which is his microcosm. In its tumultuous, bewildering yet graphically convincing authenticity, it reflects a continent and its human riches and poverty... a cosmos in which the human heart and the combined forces of history time and again burst the bounds of chaos."

Although he is reportedly the best-selling Spanish-language author and a four-time nominee for the Nobel Prize, Garcia Marquez said yesterday at his Mexico City home that he was "surprised and astonished—I imagined I was going to be one of those eternal candidates." He told reporters that "I don't feel old enough yet to receive a Nobel Prize, since really the only person younger than me to win the award was Albert Camus."

The author has lived in exile in Mexico City for many years with his wife Mercedes Barcha. Two sons, Rodrigo, 22, and Gonzalo, 20, are studying at Harvard and in Paris respectively. Garcia Marquez sought political asylum in March 1981 at the Mexican Embassy in Bogota, saying he was being "politically persecuted" and the Army suspected him of aiding in Cuban training of Colombian guerrillas.

Some Colombian observers criticized the action variously as paranoia, a promotional stunt for his books or a calculated gesture to discredit the government. According to the Associated Press, Colombia's recently elected president, Belisario Betancur, telephoned Garcia Marquez yesterday "to tell him that I put Colombia's heart in his hands," and the author said he would return there "very soon."

Garcia Marquez has long been an outspoken critic of rightist Latin American regimes, as well as an avid partisan of Cuba and personal friend of Fidel Castro. He once called the U.S. boycott of Cuba "the greatest violation of human rights in this century" and yesterday told reporters, "I'd be interested in knowing what the CIA thinks of my Nobel Prize."

He cannot obtain a visa to enter the United States because he is considered "a member of the communist or affiliated party," said a State Department official but does come to this country by obtaining a waiver.

In the mid-'70s, when Cuban troops were sent to Angola, Garcia Marquez traveled there several times and in 1977 wrote what was, in effect, the first Cuban-authorized version of the Angolan civil war. A Swedish Academy spokesman yesterday alluded to these activities, remarking that Garcia Marquez, "like most of the other important writers, is strongly committed on the side of the poor and the weak against domestic oppression and foreign economic exploitation."



GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ

"... a tumultuous, convincing cosmos"